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CSD NGO Consortium

Water Supply and Sanitation

CSD-13: Hitting the water and sanitation targets requires strong governments, better co-ordination and transparent governance

Access to safe water and adequate sanitation is the foundation of health and a key step out of poverty. But water and sanitation poverty is deepening in the developing world, caused by and contributing to other forms of deprivation and powerlessness.

- Up to 25% of African rural households' time, or 2 hours per day, is used for fetching water. This daily chore forces children to miss school, and limits the time that women have for livelihood activities.
- Bad services mean the poor pay on average 12 times more than the rich for their water. They also spend more on treatments for chronic water and sanitation-related illnesses, and lose a higher proportion of their incomes when they are unable to work due to these illnesses.

There is widening acceptance that hitting the water and sanitation targets of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) contributes significantly to progress in achieving the other targets. But we are currently lagging behind on these water and sanitation targets, especially in Africa. The targets for IWRM and WEP plans, which help to ensure long-term sustainability of water services, are also at risk of being missed.

At the thirteen session of the Commission on Sustainable Development (CSD-13), we ask governments and donors to reverse these trends by doubling efforts and resources on the following:

- **By the end of 2005, in partnership with other sector key stakeholders,**

produce an investment and delivery plan for managing their water resources and achieving their water and sanitation targets, with a separate budget for sanitation.

- **Co-ordinate the sector better, and from 2006/7, publish an annual performance report on water and sanitation services.**
- **Strengthen government capacity for its varied roles as provider and regulator of the provision of water and sanitation and improve the tools of governance over the water and sanitation sector.**
- **From 2006/7 devolve budgets to local governments with responsibility for water and sanitation, where appropriate.**
- **From 2005, provide assistance that will strengthen civil society, media and parliamentary scrutiny of water and sanitation sector performance and financing.**
- **Develop and implement IWRM and WEP plans, integrating water resource, land and ecosystems planning and management.**

The WSS targets at risk

The report by the Joint Monitoring Program of the WHO and UNICEF states that in many regions of the developing world, the MDG targets for water and sanitation are off-track, especially in Africa and for sanitation. Some 384,000 people need to gain access to sanitation every single day to reach the MDG target – a 90% increase on performance since 1990. Some 280,000 people need to gain access to safe water every single day to reach the target, a 25% increase on performance since 1990.

The countries that make real progress towards globally agreed targets do so because their governments lead in translating these into their own national and local plans and mobilise development investments to implement these plans.

We want CSD-13 to commit to assisting governments to produce the investment and delivery plans to meet their water and sanitation targets and to commit to financing these plans.

These plans will require breaking down the targets according to national and local realities: the state and distribution of existing infrastructure and water resources; available appropriate technologies and their supply chains; resource flows and gaps; and the existence and capacities of development actors that will play a role in implementing plans. Better and more accurate information will help reduce corruption and patronage in the provision of services to ensure the poor benefit from the investments.

The Poverty Eradication Action Plan of Uganda made water and sanitation one of its priorities. As a result, total investments in the sector rose between 1997 and 2002 from over US\$3 million to US\$31 million (or from 0.5% to 2.5% of the national budget over the same period). This level of investments increased national access to water services from 39.4% in 1996 to 51% in 2003,¹ or over 2 million newly served people.

We want CSD-13 to result in action plans and financial support for developing country governments to more effectively monitor information about infrastructure services and their performance. To this end, we want CSD-13 to commit to providing assistance to governments to publish an annual performance report on water and sanitation services, and for these to be available for most developing countries from 2006/07.

¹ T. Slaymaker and P. Newborne, *Implementation of Water Supply and Sanitation Programmes under PRSPs: Synthesis of research findings from sub-Saharan Africa* (ODI and WaterAid, August 2004).

Central government leadership over planning and assessing performance and co-ordinating the different actors is of paramount importance.

Effective governments plan together with other development and environment actors in the country and districts: donors, local government units, international and national NGOs and other civil society organisations, and interested private businesses. To do this, they set up consultative forums and co-ordination mechanisms such as the Joint Annual Sector Reviews in Tanzania and Uganda, or the Rural Water Supply and Sanitation Multi-Stakeholder Forum in Zambia or the Multi-Stakeholder Boards in Brazil. For many governments, this is a different way of working, requiring new skills and attitudes to participation.

We want CSD-13 to arrive at agreements to develop sector-wide approaches and co-ordinating mechanisms in developing country water and sanitation sectors. Specifically, 50% of African countries should be assisted with sector wide approaches (SWAps) by 2008.

An integrated sector approach is nowhere more necessary than in the water and sanitation sector, with its multiple users, providers, multiple funding streams and the varied impacts of the infrastructure services on the water resources and the environment.

Donors need to support the efforts of governments to undertake sector co-ordination starting with harmonising their support to developing countries. The plethora of donor procedures and reporting requirements sap government capacity in a major way, especially in those countries where the sector is heavily dependent on external assistance. In the Upper East Region of Ghana, for example, most district assemblies will deal with a variety of donors who have separate requirements resulting in around 20 separate bank accounts and an annual total of over 200 reports needing to be provided.

We want CSD-13 to agree a timetable for donor harmonisation with developing country water and sanitation investment and delivery plans and for progress to be reported on to the UN.

The changing landscape of water and sanitation service provision demands a

change in the role of governments. Public services are still the dominant means of provision, but the numbers of service providers grow everyday. In many cities and towns, a whole range of small and medium-scale service providers serve the growing numbers of those unconnected to the networks run by government-owned utilities. The proportion of the population served in this way varies from 6% in Delhi, 10% in Dhaka, 19% in Ho Chi Minh City and 44% in Jakarta.² In many rural villages, numerous different forms of civil society organisation – based on faith, ethnicity, neighbourhood, political affiliation, provide access to communities that local governments fail to reach.

The challenges for central and local governments are two-fold:

- Regulate, monitor and enforce compliance with regulations by these providers and users in order to protect people's right to water and long-term viability of supply;
- Establish mechanisms so that the positive contribution of these providers can be harnessed towards the government's achievement of its plans and targets.

In other words, the key paradigm shift for governments to make is to establish and strengthen their regulation of all providers (including themselves), and to support provision by multiple parties (apart from themselves).

What is required therefore is the strengthening of governments and the tools of governance over water and sanitation services and actors.

To rebuild government capacity in the WSS sector, there is a requirement for increased resources. An adequate proportion of this increase should go into recurrent expenditure – for recruitment and training of staff, to rebuild data reporting and data gathering/synthesising activities and setting up new units that can lead co-ordination and wield regulatory powers with effect. Where countries are devolving responsibility for water supply and sanitation provision to

local governments, financial resources should follow responsibility.

We want CSD-13 to agree action plans and financing for training and building the capacities and institutions of central and local governments to perform their expanding roles in service delivery, regulation and co-ordination of providers.

Improving the tools of governance will require governments to support and enable stronger scrutiny of their operations in the sector. Improved scrutiny by legislatures and independent commentators from media and civil society can only happen where governments open up access to their plans and strategies for the sector and information on their own performance as providers and co-ordinators of the provision of water and sanitation.

We want CSD-13 to agree programmes and financing for building the capacity of civil society organisations, legislatures, and national and local media to undertake effective scrutiny of government and donor undertakings in the water and sanitation sector.

² J. Winpenny, *Financing Water Infrastructure* (World Water Council and Global Water Partnership, 2003).

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